

About My JRCOSTEP Experience
ENS Brent N Reed



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My name is ENS Brent N. Reed and I am preparing to enter my third professional year as a student pharmacist at the University of Tennessee College of Pharmacy in Memphis, TN. During the summer of 2007, I had the opportunity to participate in a JRCOSTEP experience at the Indian Health Service (IHS) Headquarters in Rockville, MD with Rear Admiral (RADM) Robert E. Pittman, Chief Pharmacy Officer for the Public Health Service (PHS) and Principal Pharmacy Consultant for the IHS. I was also fortunate to meet and interact with a number of other key pharmacists in the Office of Clinical and Preventive Services (OCPS) at IHS Headquarters, including CAPT James Bresette, OCPS Deputy Director, and CDR Scott Giberson, National HIV/AIDS Consultant for IHS.

Over the course of my service at IHS Headquarters, I was involved in a number of different projects, demonstrating the dynamic nature of a career in the Public Health Service and IHS in particular. The administrative offices in Rockville help coordinate programs throughout IHS – everything from the provision of clinical services to the development of materials to recruit additional healthcare professionals. As a JRCOSTEP, I participated in several meetings and conferences, helped develop an orientation program for OCPS, and reviewed documents to provide feedback from a student perspective.

One of the highlights of my JRCOSTEP experience was having the opportunity to meet the acting Surgeon General, RADM Kenneth Moritsugu in Washington, DC. RADM Pittman and several other officers representing the Pharmacist Professional Advisory Committee (PharmPAC) discussed a proposal to increase the number of PHS pharmacists receiving training in pharmacy-based immunizations delivery. During the meeting, I was also able to discuss the impact of student pharmacists in increasing immunization rates nationwide through *Operation Immunization*, a national patient care project coordinated by the American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP).

I also attended the Medication Disposal Forum, where representatives from various professional and regulatory organizations discussed the impacts of improperly disposed medications on the environment. During the forum, I had an opportunity to learn more about SMARxT Disposal, a program developed through a partnership between the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the American Pharmacists Association. As a consumer outreach effort, the central theme of SMARxT Disposal is to provide environmentally-friendly alternatives for medication disposal.

During the month of June, I accompanied two representatives from the PHS to the annual meeting of the Pharmacy Manpower Project in Alexandria, VA. Here, we had an opportunity to view the latest data on pharmacist supply and demand, discussing with various member organizations their efforts to address

pharmacy workforce issues. I later had the opportunity to present these findings to the PharmPAC at their July meeting.

Throughout my tenure at IHS Headquarters, I assisted several members of OCPS staff in the development of an orientation program for new employees and interns. During my first few weeks at IHS, I recorded notes on various operations and functions within the office and tried to identify missing components that could be included in a revised training workbook for new employees. By the end of my JRCOSTEP, a colleague and I completed the new workbook, as well as directions for developing a live orientation session.

Finally, I had an opportunity to review a number of PHS and IHS materials, including documents used for recruitment and retention. As a student pharmacist, I was able to provide insight on the benefits that graduating health professionals find attractive in potential careers. My involvement in these discussions also allowed me to field questions from my colleagues about careers in PHS. I was also able to review the proposed national HIV/AIDS workplan for the IHS, providing comments and additional feedback on the program and its implementation nationwide.

Overall, my experience as a JRCOSTEP at IHS Headquarters has been very memorable. I would definitely recommend the program to any student pharmacist who is interested in a rewarding and dynamic pharmacy career. It has taught me much about the opportunities available in pharmacy and the role that the PHS plays in improving the nation's health.